

origin, which causes scientists and managers alike to ask whose gear is responsible. Laist's discussion of figuring out which type of gear is worst for right whales nicely dovetails with his earlier discussion of landing laws in Iceland, Cape Cod, and elsewhere. Specifically, he describes the medieval and colonial-era laws to settle disputes on ownership: namely, who should profit from a whale that washes up on shore bearing a harpoon—the whaler or the landowner? These parallels crop up throughout the book, and allow one a much broader and deeper understanding of the current issues.

As humans have progressed as a species, our technological developments have been astounding. Yet these developments have come with a cost, as we have made it easier and easier to extract resources from the Earth. Whether the resources are the blubber and baleen of right whales or crude oil and offshore wind, humans have been able to move to new places, harvest resources until they are gone, and then move to a new place. As Laist documents, eventually humans ran out of new places to go and right whales to catch—thereby ending the commercial whaling of this species. Though right whales have been protected since the 1930s, Laist makes the case that our environmental consciousness didn't really blossom until the late 1960s and early 1970s. This means we have been actively trying to save the species for about 5% of the 1000-year collective history of our two species. Let's hope we have the patience and foresight to bring about changes needed to protect this and other threatened species—a burden that needs to be shared by us all.

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FOUR ANTARCTIC YEARS IN THE SOUTH ORKNEY ISLANDS: AN ANNOTATED TRANSLATION OF CUATRO AÑOS EN LAS ORCADAS DEL SUR, by JOSÉ MANUEL MONETA. Translated by KATHLEEN SKILTON and KENN BACK; edited by ROBERT K. HEADLAND. London: Bernard Quaritch Ltd., 2017. ISBN 978-0-9955192-0-6. 439 p., maps, illus., appendices, index. Softbound. £50; US\$65.00; €56.

This book is an account of four winters spent in the South Orkneys by the Argentine Manuel Moneta in the 1920s, as observer and leader of a team at the Argentine base on Laurie Island. Antarctic affairs were then in a period of change: international interest in the Antarctic, initially inspired by depletion of whales in the Arctic, had been growing, and now questions of sovereignty were arising.

The Laurie Island base, today the longest operating research station in Antarctica, has been collecting weather

and other geophysical information since 1903. For the first two decades, the overwintering crews sent to the base were very cosmopolitan. The first all-Argentine crew, led by Moneta, did not arrive until 1927.

Moneta had a lifelong interest in the polar regions: he had trained as a meteorologist so that he could be part of the 1923–24 expedition to the station, and he was its only Spanish-speaking member. The expedition sailed from Buenos Aires via British-controlled South Georgia, where two-thirds of the world's whale oil was processed in plants operated by various nations, including Argentina.

The expedition crew transferred to a whale catcher for the journey to South Orkney. They had a rough trip, encountering huge waves, icebergs, and pack ice. Reaching South Orkney, their siren woke up the resident crew who had been there for a year. As there had been no communication during the year, it had been pre-arranged that a flag signal would indicate whether anyone had died. Moneta describes the arrival and succeeding days of changeover in a very personal style. There were several days of unloading supplies, including sacks of coal, and unpacking for their year. Then the old crew left.

The base consisted of a living house, which was clean and in good condition, with nearby observatory huts. Water was derived from melted glacier ice, and perishables, such as potatoes, were packed into the living quarters for warmth. The main protein source for the crew was penguins and their eggs. They settled into a tight daily routine necessary for men living and working in close quarters and speaking different languages. Their routines were based on the experience of their predecessors.

There is greater detail on the daily life of the men than is usual in polar books—such things as personal hygiene, weekly baths, thoughts of home, dietary preferences (e.g., some penguin species were preferred over others; they ate hundreds of penguins each year), and the effects of tight 24-hour work and living schedules.

Moneta describes the hourly schedule of weather and other observations, with inside and outside measurements night and day. The data were accumulated for shipment to Argentina at the end of their year. He describes his own experiences becoming disoriented (with a hurricane lantern) while traveling 150 m to make night measurements. He recalls accidents of the past, when one man had simply disappeared and another lost his fingers to frostbite. Their 24-hour routine of work and social life was important to them. Although one man was technically the leader, things seemed to be organized on a consensual basis with shared chores and duties.

As spring 1923 approached, birds, seals, and penguins began to return. Fresh penguin eggs became available again, and they collected 4000 for the following winter's crew. Open water was sometimes visible in the distance; the penguins traveled long distances over the ice for food.

The expedition members began thinking about their departure, which was still months away. They had no idea about when exactly they would be picked up. Small tensions

among them became more prevalent; Moneta describes a serious tiff, which lasted for days, about some bars of soap.

Summer arrived, heralded by lots of birds and temperatures above freezing. But in late December (Antarctic summer), they were still cut off by pack ice. There were anxious discussions about pickup and the inevitable scenarios for staying another winter with low coal supplies. Since their personal gear had been packed for some time, they thoroughly cleaned, repaired, and painted all their buildings ready for the new crew. This annual routine was one of the reasons that the buildings had stood up so well over the years.

January 1924 gave way to February, with all sorts of false alarms as people spotted new black specks in the pack ice. There were the inevitable bets on the date of pickup.

Then a whale catcher appeared, and they rowed out to it when it was close enough. On it was a group of five wearing winter clothing: their replacements, with one year's mail and news. Again, there was only one Argentine. Moneta's group sailed away, calling in on a huge Norwegian whale factory ship near Signy Island, under British customs control. Moneta was already thinking about coming back the next year, with a radio link.

Ten months later, in January 1925, he did return. The radio did not work, but they used the generator to provide electric light in the main hut. He summarizes this year, in which there seems to have been more tension between the expedition members. He returned to Buenos Aires thinking about returning with another radio and a crew of Argentines. He spent eight months there, recruiting six people rather than the usual five in order to include a radio operator.

After an official send-off in 1926, they sailed to South Georgia, where they trans-shipped to a modern whale catcher for the South Orkneys. En route, they met up again with huge factory ships, operated by various nationalities under British customs control. They reached the base on Laurie Island two months earlier than usual to allow time for proper construction of the radio station before winter set in.

As a result, in 1927, Moneta became the leader of the first all-Argentine crew, triggering national interest in the expedition. They worked furiously to build two new rooms and erect the radio mast. They had trouble starting the radio and learning the basics of operating it. When they got through, they received a message from the President of Argentina, who was most complimentary, and they started transmitting weather data for the first time.

During the following winter, on their national day, there was a special live exchange via a radio station in Buenos Aires with officials and members of their families. This was a very emotional, nationalistic occasion that captured the imagination of Argentines listening in. The radio link had not only taken away the old isolation, it had attuned the nation to the existence of an Argentine Antarctic expedition. This was a year in which Moneta was very much in charge. He made a film of their life, which proved very popular and further fueled interest in Antarctica across Argentina.

After a rough return trip to Buenos Aires, Moneta began planning for his fourth winter in South Orkney, again as leader. As the date drew near, some months had passed without radio contact. Crowds were present to see the crew depart for the Antarctic base. They had a very rough trip out, and when they arrived at the base, they discovered that the radio operator had died. The winter is described mainly as more of the same (e.g., one man sick, training dogs, one dog lost, settling in socially with the new crew).

The longevity of this station, from the time of Robert Falcon Scott to the present day, is remarkable. It operated during wars, including the Falklands War, and during the enactment of the Antarctic Treaty System (South Orkney comes under the Treaty).

Twelve editions of Moneta's book were published in Spanish, beginning in 1939. Their popularity stimulated interest and pride and created a lasting enthusiasm for Antarctica in Argentina. This translation of the original book includes additional annotations for the English-speaking reader, as well as photographs from the original editions. It serves to introduce an English-speaking audience to life on an isolated, Spanish-speaking meteorological station that has persisted for almost a century. This book will be of interest to polar enthusiasts and those interested in ordinary people living in great isolation.

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THE GREATEST SHOW IN THE ARCTIC: THE AMERICAN EXPLORATION OF FRANZ JOSEF LAND, 1898–1905. By P.J. CAPELOTTI. Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 2016. ISBN 978-0-8061-5222-6. xxi + 624 p., maps, b&w illus., notes, works cited, index. Hardbound. US\$34.95.

The polar regions are geographically remote from most human population centers, but have loomed closer in the Western imagination for several centuries. Or rather, the Canadian archipelago, Greenland, and northern Scandinavia have been of primary interest to North Americans and Europeans: the Arctic archipelago of Franz Josef Land, by contrast, has been notably distant in Arctic imaginaries. P.J. Capelotti's deeply researched, lively, and riveting *The Greatest Show in the Arctic* should by all rights bring Franz Josef Land fully into view. This magisterial volume joins Capelotti's earlier work on the archipelago in displaying a limber scholarly attention to turn-of-the-20th-century Norwegian, British, and American exploration. He brings historical methods to bear on the material and writes with wit and energy of the three American expeditions to Franz Josef Land between 1898 and 1905: the Wellman Polar Expedition (led by a Chicago newspaperman,